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Thais Continue Dope Hustling

SOME of Thailand's top officials are operating a fleet of 11 trawlers which move dozens of tons of opium a year to Hong Kong for shipment to American addicts.

The names of the Thai-registered ships, each capable of hauling 3.3 tons of opium a voyage, are known to American officials in Southeast Asia. So are the Thai officials' names.

But despite a joint understanding signed in September by Secretary of State William Rogers and then-Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman on ending the narcotics traffic, the dope hustling by Thai officials goes on.

These are the findings of a heretofore secret report being prepared for the House Foreign Affairs committee by Rep. Lester Wolff, (D-N.Y.)

Wolff gathered his data from disgruntled U.S. narcotics agents, who feel their hands are tied for political reasons; from customs men; from foreign officials, and from State Department officers themselves.

The Congressman's report says that Thai officials in the smuggling racket are so well organized that they have prepared formal contingency plans for shifting their terminal point to Manila if Hong Kong is closed.

In fact, the Thai officials have already established ties with corrupt Philippine authorities, and have picked unloading spots along the island's jigsaw shoreline.

At present, much of the 750 tons of opium produced in Laos, Thailand and Burma is trucked down to Bangkok under the very noses of the Thai government. More than 50 tons a year of this raw opium, plus an unknown amount of processed opium, is then loaded aboard the ships.

The trawlers carry it into Red Chinese waters where it is loaded into junks which slip into Hong Kong's numerous harbors. The raw opium is then processed and smuggled as heroin into the United States.

Wolff is drafting a letter to President Nixon urging him to cut off aid to Thailand unless the Thais live up to the September agreement. The Foreign Affairs committee man is also introducing a "sense of the House" resolution to request Mr. Nixon to suspend the aid.